

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated November 7, 2007. Claims 1, 3 to 6, 8 to 10, 22 to 33, and 37 to 42 are pending, of which Claims 22 to 33 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 10, and 37 are the independent claims. Claims 1, 10, and 37 to 39 have been amended herein. Claim 7 has been cancelled without prejudice. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claims 1, 3 to 5, 7, 8, 37, 39, 41, and 42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Analytical Biochemistry, vol. 138, 1984, pp. 119-124 (Smith), and Claims 1, 3 to 10, and 37 to 42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Smith. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended to Applicants' undersigned representative during a personal interview conducted on March 27, 2008, and during a follow-up telephone conversation on April 7, 2008. At the personal interview, the Examiner tentatively indicated that Smith does not disclose the subject matter of Claims 7 and 10. During the telephone conversation, the Examiner tentatively indicated that Smith does not disclose the subject matter of Claim 37 (with the recitation of a flexible material being deleted). In keeping with these indications, Claim 1 has been amended to contain the subject matter of Claim 7, Claims 10 and 37 have been rewritten in independent form (with the recitation of a flexible material being deleted from Claim 37), and Claims 38 and 39 have been amended to depend from Claim 37.

With respect to non-elected Claims 22 to 33, rejoinder of these claims is respectfully requested upon the allowance of Claim 1, pursuant to MPEP § 821.04(b).

In view of the foregoing, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

/Damond E. Vadnais/
Damond E. Vadnais
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 52,310

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3800
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

FGHS_WS 2086667v1